

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1163

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1541

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SOPN, UY, CI

SUBJ: THE PINOCHET - BORDABERRY MEETING, DOMESTIC IMPACT

REFS: (A) MONTEVIDEO 1458 (DTG 271403Z APR 76), (B)

MONTEVIDEO 1467 (DTG 271942Z APR 76), (C) MONTEVIDEO

1474 (NOTAL) DTG 271941Z APR 76

1. SUMMARY:

ONE OF THE LOCAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE PINOCHET VISIT IS REVIVED INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE MEDIA AND POLITICIANS IN THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY. IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS BOTH PRESIDENTS SAID THERE WAS A NEED FOR NEW POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

A NUMBER OF EDITORIALS THEN DISCUSSED THE NEED FOR POLITICAL CHANGE AND ONE POLITICAL PARTY SENT A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT ASKING FOR ELECTIONS AND A RESUMPTION OF PARTY POLITICS. SO FAR IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THIS REVIVED PARTY ACTIVITY WILL HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON DECISIONS ON THE
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FUTURE COURSE OF THE GOVERNMENT, DECISIONS WHICH SHOULD BE

MADE SOON. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING THE PINOCHET VISIT, PRESIDENT BORDABERRY REFERRED TO THE EXPERIENCE DEMOCRATIC URUGUAY HAD HAD WITH MARXISM. AFTER WEAKENING INSTITUTIONS, THE MARXISTS WORKED THROUGH POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICIZED UNIONS TO FACILITATE THE DECOMPOSITION OF A SOCIETY WHICH WAS BECOMING LESS AND LESS FREE. THE PRESIDENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE STATE EXISTS TO SERVE "THE COMMON GOOD, PUBLIC ORDER, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE" AND THAT IT MUST IMPOSE ITSELF, "WITH THE CONSENT OF A FREE AND CREATIVE PEOPLE." PINOCHET REVEALED THAT HE AND BORDABERRY HAD DISCUSSED CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND AGREED ON A NUMBER OF THINGS, INCLUDING THE CONCLUSION THAT A NEW DEMOCRACY IS NEEDED. THE COLORADO PARTY NEWSPAPER, EL DIA, IMMEDIATELY POINTED OUT THAT IN CHILE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IS BEING CARRIED OUT THROUGH CONSULTATION WITH THE PEOPLE. EL DIA, WHICH HAS BEEN THE MOST OUTSPOKEN IN ITS THINLY VEILED CRITICISM OF THE PRESENT REGIME, CALLED FOR A RETURN TO URUGUAY'S TRADITIONAL LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND CRITICIZED OTHER NEWSPAPERS WHICH ESPOUSE UNDEFINED "NEW" INSTITUTIONS. AN EXECUTIVE OF THE NEWSPAPER (AND A CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERT IN HIS OWN RIGHT) TOLD US THAT HE IS VERY ALARMED TO SEE THAT THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF URUGUAY IS BEING DISCUSSED IN SECRET BY A SMALL GROUP OF MEN, WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH ANY OF THE GROUPS WHO WILL BE AFFECTED BY CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY. EL DIA, HE SAID, "IS GOING TO STIR UP THE WATERS TO SEE WHAT IS HIDDEN UNDERNEATH."

3. EL PAIS AND LA MANANA GENERALLY SUPPORT THE GOU AND IN THIS INSTANCE THERE WAS NO EXCEPTION. GENERALLY, CONFINING THEMSELVES TO COVERING, IN LAVISH DETAIL, ALL ASPECTS OF THE VISIT, THE TWO PAPERS KEPT THEIR EDITORIAL COMMENTS IN CHECK. LA MANANA DID NOTE THAT IT WAS TIME TO REFLECT, PERHAPS PUBLICLY, ON THE FUTURE OF URUGUAY. THE EDITORS SAID THAT THEY DID NOT FAVOR PRECIPITOUS OR RADICAL CHANGE. RATHER, IT IS BETTER TO FIRST ANALYZE THE PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY AND THEN TRY TO FIND SOLUTIONS WHICH REFLECT REALITY. "THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE COUNTRIES SHOW THAT RADICAL SOLUTIONS NEVER LASTED SINCE THEY DID NOT REFLECT REALITY. SLOW

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REFORMS AND GRADUAL ADJUSTMENTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE PERMITTED PROFOUND CHANGES BASED ON SOLID FOUNDATIONS."

4. AND THAT IS PROBABLY WHAT THE COUNTRY WILL GET. AFTER THE PINOCHET VISIT, A HIGH MILITARY OFFICIAL (A MEMBER OF THE HIGH LEVEL MILITARY/CIVILIAN GROUP DISCUSSING THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY) TOLD US THAT NOTHING HAD BEEN DECIDED YET, BUT THAT A RETURN TO THE WIDE OPEN

POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE PAST IS NOT IN THE CARDS. THE
PEOPLE MIGHT BE GIVEN SOME VOICE THIS YEAR, BUT WHETHER
THIS WOULD BE DONE THROUGH A PLEBISCITE, LIMITED ELECTIONS,
OR WHATEVER IS UNDECIDED. IN ANY EVENT, THE PRESIDENTS'
STATEMENTS AND SUBSEQUENT PRESS COMMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL
REFORM SEEMED TO GIVE SOME POLITICIANS A NEW RAY OF HOPE
AND PROMPTED THE COLORADO PARTY, LATE IN THE VISIT, TO
SEND BORDABERRY A LETTER CALLING FOR A RETURN TO NORMAL
POLITICAL LIFE, INCLUDING THE HOLDING OF ELECTIONS.
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